

## CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

1. A packaging means comprising:  
an elongated hollow tube housing;  
an elongated member disposed within said elongated hollow tube housing; and  
a protective covering enclosing said elongated hollow tube housing with said  
elongated member;  
wherein the packaging means protects the elongated member from being axially  
compressed and contaminated.
2. A packaging means as in claim 1, wherein said elongated hollow tube housing is  
slightly longer than said elongated member.
3. A packaging means as in claim 1, wherein said elongated hollow tube housing has  
a first end and a second end wherein the first end is sealed.
4. A packaging means as in claim 1, wherein said protective covering has a notch  
formed at one or more of its edges to allow easy opening of the protective covering.
5. A packaging means as in claim 1, wherein said protective covering is made of  
paper, plastic, or aluminum foil.
6. A packaging means as in claim 3, wherein said protective covering is made of  
paper, plastic, or aluminum foil.
7. A packaging means comprising:  
an elongated hollow tube housing;  
a swab applicator disposed within said elongated hollow tube housing; and

a protective covering enclosing said elongated hollow tube housing with said swab applicator;

wherein the packaging means protects the swab applicator from being axially compressed and contaminated.

8. A packaging means as in claim 7, wherein said elongated hollow tube housing is slightly longer than said elongated member.

9. A packaging means as in claim 7, wherein said elongated hollow tube housing has a first end and a second end wherein the first end is sealed.

10. A packaging means as in claim 7, wherein said protective covering has a notch formed at one or more of its edges to allow easy opening of the protective covering.

11. A packaging means as in claim 7, wherein said protective covering is made of paper, plastic, or aluminum foil.

12. A packaging means as in claim 9, wherein said protective covering is made of paper, plastic, or aluminum foil.

13. A packaging means comprising:  
an elongated hollow tube housing with a first end and a second end wherein the first end is sealed;

a swab applicator with a handle and an absorbent tip disposed within said elongated hollow tube housing with the absorbent tip disposed near said sealed end of said elongated hollow tube housing; and

a protective covering enclosing said elongated hollow tube housing with said swab applicator;

wherein the packaging means protects the swab applicator from being axially compressed and contaminated.